

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPG-02
FAA-00 MCT-01 SY-05 IO-13 /088 W
-----110105Z 018762 /64

R 101232Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0824
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STOCKHOLM 2493

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SW
SUBJ: GOS REFUSES TO EXTRADITE SOVIET PLANE HIJACKER

REF: STOCKHOLM 2273

1. GOS ANNOUNCED ON JUNE 9 THAT IT WOULD PROSECUTE IN SWEDEN VASILIJ SOSNOVSKIJ WHO, UNARMED, HAD FORCED THE PILOT OF A SOVIET PASSENGER PLANE ON MAY 26 TO DIVERT FROM RIGA TO STOCKHOLM. THE SWEDISH DECISION MEANS, THEREFORE, THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ACCEDE TO THE SOVIETS' REQUEST THAT THE 37-YEAR-OLD MECHANIC FROM LATVIA BE EXTRADITED TO THE SOVIET UNION UNDER TERMS OF THE HAGUE ANTI-HIJACKING CONVENTION. IN ITS ANNOUNCEMENT, THE GOS EMPHASIZED THAT SWEDISH LAW PROHIBITS THE EXTRADITION OF PERSONS TO COUNTRIES WHERE THEIR LIFE MIGHT BE IN DANGER AND THAT THE HAGUE CONVENTION CALLS FOR WITHER EXTRADITION OF HIJACKERS OR PROSECUTION IN THE RECEIVING COUNTRY.

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2. SOSNOVSKIJ HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH AIRCRAFT HIJACKING IN THE FIRST DEGREE AND HIS TRIAL IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS. NOTING THAT THERE IS NO DOUBT WHATEVER THAT SOSNOVSKIJ WILL BE JUDGED GUILTY, THE SWEDISH MEDIA NEVERTHELESS POINT OUT THAT BECAUSE HE WAS UNARMED SOSNOVSKIJ IS LIKELY TO RECEIVE A LIGHT SENTENCE. BOTH THE PRESS AND

MFA SOURCES MENTIONED A POSSIBLE FOUR-YEAR SENTENCE WHICH, WITH TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR, WOULD MEAN THAT HE COULD BE RELEASED WITHIN TWO YEARS.

3. ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCES, SOSNOVSKIJ HAS A WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN -- AGES 15, 13 AND 9 -- IN RIGA. HE HAS REQUESTED POLITICAL ASYLUM IN SWEDEN, AND IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT SOVIET AUTHORITIES WILL AGREE TO ANY REQUEST WHICH MAY BE MADE BY SOSNOVSKIJ THAT HIS FAMILY JOIN HIM. THE SOURCES ALSO MENTIONED THAT SOSNOVSKIJ SEVERAL YEARS ATTEMPTED TO CROSS INTO TURKEY BY FOOT BUT WAS CAPTURED AND SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME THERE-AFTER IN VARIOUS SOVIET MENTAL-INSTITUTIONS. SWEDISH INVESTIGATORS INDICATED HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT HIS MENTAL HEALTH IS SOUND.

4. SOVIET REACTION TO THE SWEDISH DECISION HAS NOT SURFACED YET. SOVIET EMBASSY PRESS ATTACHE VJATJESLAV VASILJEV SAID ON JUNE 9 THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT "WILL NOW HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT MEASURES TO TAKE." DESPITE SEVERITY OF SOSNOVSKIJ'S CRIME, SWEDISH MEDIA ARE NOT LIKELY TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. THE SWEDISH PILOTS ASSOCIATION, HOWEVER, INDICATED THAT THE DECISION WAS "EXTREMELY REGRETTABLE", EXPLAINING THAT THE REFUSAL TO EXTRADITE SOSNOVSKIJ COULD WELL ENCOURAGE OTHER TO ATTEMPT SIMILAR HIJACKINGS.
PERRY

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Message Attributes

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